

FREDERICK COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING MINUTES
FREDERICK SENIOR CENTER
June 13, 2011

DOA MEMBERS	DOA STAFF	EXCUSED	UNEXCUSED	GUESTS
Rae Ann Butler	Elly Jenkins	David Gray, Comm	Millard Haines	
Hal Ehart	Margaret Nusbaum	Carol Krimm, Alderman		
Dennis Ford	Susan M. Ramsburg Recording Sec			
Jim Judd	Pat Rosensteel			
Diane Julian	Carolyn True			
Louise Lynch				
Mary Rice				
Debra Savageau				
Virginia Skelley				
Stephen Wilhide				
Robert Wannemacher				

- I. Call to Order – Louise Lynch, Chair**, called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.
- II. Welcome & Introductions** – Louise welcomed all attendees. Guests were present at today's meeting so introductions were done around the table. Dennis Ford attended today as a new member.
- III. Action on the Agenda** – The following items were added to today's agenda. Jim Judd suggested some discussion regarding the change

at the Thurmont Senior Center. He also would like to add discussion regarding the frequency of CoA meetings.

IV. Approval of Minutes – The minutes of the May 9, 2011 meeting were approved as written. All were in favor.

V. Commissioner's Report – Commissioner Gray was not present at today's meeting.

Alderman's Report – Alderman Krimm was not present at today's meeting.

VI. Update on Information and Assistance Services, Elly Jenkins – Elly was invited to the meeting today to give an overview of current service needs. Some needs for seniors are unchanged. Transportation continues to be an issue especially for medical appointments that are out of the county. Dental, vision, and hearing impairment services are lacking in the area. There are some services available, but they are very limited and sometimes hard for seniors to access.

A new issue is arising with the energy assistance program. Seniors who qualify for the program are finding that the funds they receive no longer cover their needs due to the increase in energy costs. There is also a decrease in the amount received due to increase in applications for the funds available.

A recent change in the in QMB (Qualified Medical Beneficiary) program has created a physician issue for some seniors. The QMB program (eligibility is determined by assets and income) has normally covered the twenty percent of a physician visit that Medicare-B does not cover. This program no longer covers that twenty percent. Seniors with this card are being declined service by physicians if they cannot pay the amount billed after MC-B. This change was made by the State due to lack of funding. Seniors may not even be aware of this change until they have a doctor visit and are asked for the twenty percent co-pay.

Open enrollment for Medicare D has been changed to October 15 through December 7th. Sometimes a senior is getting all the financial assistance available to them and still has difficulty paying the prescription co-pays. Many seniors are on multiple medications and the co-pays add up and become a hardship. Some individuals are coming in who are transitioning from Medical Assistance to Medicare. Coverage is very different and cost of the program to the participant is higher. Medicare Advantage plan availability is very limited in Frederick County. Supplement plan costs are very expensive and some seniors cannot afford the extra coverage.

Affordable housing is another recurring issue. Rent costs in the area continue to rise and there have been no increases in Social Security payments. The property tax credit program is a good program but is not well known. These funds are also stretched and the individual credit awarded has been reduced over the years. There is also a Renter's Tax Credit available for individuals sixty and over or disabled individuals. It also is based on income. When individuals come in to see Elly or Dennis for an appointment, they are screened for any programs for which they may qualify. Individuals can be screened for some programs over the phone.

Elly, Dennis, and Mary Rice will be doing an outreach event on June 21st in the Emmitsburg and Thurmont Senior Centers. Elly has done many outreach events in different areas of the county. There will be no funding available anytime soon for additional staff. There may be a time in the future when additional staff would be considered. Current BoCC should be kept aware of the consistent need for senior services and staff to manage the programs and assist with senior access to the programs.

Summer Schedule/August Retreat, Louise Lynch – It was agreed that the commission needs to meet every month during the summer. It was also agreed that there will need to be an elongated retreat meeting during the summer. The strategic plan could be reviewed during the retreat. Jim Judd suggested another item to be discussed would be the frequency of meetings during the year. There are times during the year when it would be advisable to meet more often. The state legislation session timeframe would be one example. July will be a regular meeting. The August 8th meeting will become a retreat which will begin at 10:00am until approximately 2:00pm. A motion was put forth to accept this summer schedule by Jim Judd and was seconded by Ginny Skelley. All were in favor. The retreat will be held at the Frederick Senior Center. Lunch can be ordered from the Senior Center with a two day advance notice or members are welcome to bring a lunch.

VII. Future of Senior Services, Louise Lynch – This item was deferred to next month's meeting.

Thurmont Senior Center, All - A DoA staff report regarding the Thurmont Senior Center was distributed at today's meeting. Margaret and Carolyn presented this report to the BoCC at a work session on June 7 at Winchester Hall. The proposal indicates that the DoA will withdraw from the day to day operations at the Thurmont Senior Center beginning July 1, 2011. The BoCC were in agreement with this recommendation. There have been on-going issues with this center for many years. There is a very active Senior Center Board of Directors who has not been happy with the way things have been

progressing at the center. Recent issues were the lack of a full time coordinator and the quality of food served for the noon meal. Participants who choose to attend the Emmitsburg Senior Center will be transported for activities and meals. The Emmitsburg Center will go back to a five day a week schedule. Any funds that would have been used at the Thurmont Senior Center will now be used to support the Emmitsburg Senior Center. There will be no loss of staff with this transition.

Hal and Louise attended as representatives of the Commission of Aging to show support for the DoA in this matter. There was some discussion on how the CoA supported this decision without a meeting or email to garner opinions of the entire CoA. Some members of the Commission were surprised to see the CoA support mentioned in the local newspaper. The issues with this center have been chronic and this commission has been aware of it. There was not an Executive Committee meeting to discuss support. The Commission has historically supported the DoA in its endeavors to get along with this group. The majority agrees with the recommendations but it was disconcerting to see all happen without prior knowledge. The timeframe of events was very short and discreet. Most CoA members were appreciative that some members were present to show support.

The Emmitsburg Center will need our complete support now to ensure it is effective and accessible to anyone no longer able to attend Thurmont. This is an opportunity to have it become a regional senior center. We will have staff available to allow for more home delivered meals to participants.

VIII. USM, Ginny Skelley – Ginny distributed minutes from the final meeting. The USM is looking for a volunteer event planner to help with the 2012 Rally. They are also requesting that each group member commit to purchasing four rally tickets. The date for the next rally is January 24, 2012. This commission is willing to commit to the purchase. An individual membership is \$15.00 and this includes a ticket to the rally. There have been enhancements to the website. You will get informative emails from the USM if you become a member. The next meeting will be held in September. There was not a lot of legislation this session due to lack of funding.

Nomination Committee, Jim Judd – Dennis Ford is the newest member of this Commission. There was a suggestion to see if Earl Beck is interested in coming back to the commission. Louise will contact him. There are still several vacancies. It would be beneficial to have the ad in the local newspapers. Jim will talk with Joyce Grossnickle regarding advertising in local papers. Hal will do a new member orientation with Dennis.

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Director, Carolyn True – Carolyn distributed the May DoA report. The Area Plan will be a complete rewrite from previous years and requires a public hearing. Staff will be working on this rewrite. Please let Carolyn know if you have any suggestions for inclusion in this report.

The DoA received a donation from the All Saints Episcopal Church. The Caregiver Program was the recipient of the \$4,000.00 donation. The funds are being used for respite care. This donation eliminated the wait list for respite funds.

The staff is working on the update for the next version of the Blue Book. We will be going back to the 2009 format. Staff are also working on a financial literacy guide for senior needs. Professionals in the community are writing article for the financial guide. Books will be ready and available for the Elder Expo this fall.

There will be an evening program this Wednesday, June 15, titled “Will my Money last as long as me?” There will be a dinner before this program. Patty McGill and a local attorney will present information regarding financial planning as you retire.

Announcements, All,

There was an article in the newspaper regarding the first of many steps to take place at Citizen’s Care and Rehab. There is a growing concern for the future of this facility and Montevue. It would be a great benefit to have someone from this commission become a liaison to the Board at CCRC/Montevue. CCRC/Montevue would also like to have a board member in lieu of just a liaison, as would Transit.

IX. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 2:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Ramsburg,
Recording Secretary

Upcoming Dates:

Public hearings for the Public-Private Partnership:

County employees on July 12 at 7:00 pm and July 19 at 9:00 am

General public on July 21 at 1:30 pm and July 26 at 7:00 pm

However, all hearings are open to the public and will be held in the first floor hearing room of Winchester Hall.

Frederick County Commission on Aging
6/13/2011

July 20, 2011 10:00 – Public hearing on FY '12-'15 area Plan and Senior Care
Annual Plan, Urbana Senior Center

Elder Expo, Wednesday October 5th, 9:00am – 2:00pm